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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 003565

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI PRIME MINISTER REINVIGORATES MILITIA  
REINTEGRATION

REF: A. BAGHDAD 254 04

[B](#). BAGHDAD 656

[C](#). BAGHDAD 1408

[D](#). BAGHDAD 2641

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY ACTING DCM DAVID C. LITT FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d)

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY. At a meeting with the Commanding General of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq on 21 August 2005, Minister of Interior Bayan Jabr gave LTG Petraeus a copy of a 10 August Prime Minister memorandum, which directs the Minister to implement CPA Order 91. CPA 91 prohibits militia "not under the command structure of the Iraqi Transitional Government...except as provided by federal law." The Prime Minister's memorandum may represent initial action to reinvigorate the Iraqi Transitional Government's process for militia reintegration, which has been moribund since the transition of sovereignty last June. The Transition and Reintegration Implementation Committee (TRIC) was also established by CPA 91, and the Minister intends to use the TRIC to execute the directive. After seeing the PM memo, key TRIC members stated that they are wary as to the motivation behind the renewed interest in the implementation of CPA 91. In his weekly meeting with LTG Petraeus on 28 August, Minister Jabr promised to address TRIC concerns in execution of the process. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (C) At a meeting with LTG Petraeus and Senior IRMO-MOI Advisor AMB Yellin on 21 August 2005, Minister of Interior Jabr presented a copy of a directive from Prime Minister al-Jafari, instructing the Minister to implement the provisions of CPA Order 91. Order 91, the "Regulation of Armed Forces and Militias within Iraq," was signed into force by CPA Administrator L. Paul Bremer in June 2004. It defines the process of militia transition and reintegration (T&R) for a set of nine politically-affiliated militia groups deemed to have supported the resistance against the Ba'athist regime (REFTEL A). At face value, the Prime Minister's memorandum potentially revitalizes the T&R program, which had stopped dead in the water from lack of political interest by the ITG and the political parties themselves (REFTEL D).

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MAKING A RUN FOR THE MONEY  
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[3](#). (C) What seemed to be a positive development was met with wary skepticism by senior members of the TRIC. The directive is viewed by these members as a possible ploy for Shia-backed militias to accrue transition benefits without actually disarming. At a meeting of the TRIC on 24 August, Chairman Saad al-Obeidi of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) stated that the committee, in response to PM al-Jafari's order, had resubmitted its proposal for energizing the T&R program to the Ministerial Council on National Security (MCNS). The proposal included the committee's request for operational funds, stronger organizational structure and greater authority to enforce compliance. In a subsequent conversation with PolMilOff, Saad stated he was witness to an earlier meeting between Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Ameri and PM al-Jafari regarding militia integration. Saad claimed PM al-Jafari was under pressure from al-Ameri and SCIRI's Abdul Aziz al-Hakim to effect pension benefits for aging Badr militiamen, ostensibly to ease the financial burden now carried by the Badr Organization.

[4](#). (C) Saad also indicated that Minister Jabr's principal concern upon receiving the order was the availability of funds for the T&R program. Saad was subsequently tasked by the Minister to draft a request for the ITG to allot \$60 million to the MOI for T&R. Saad stated that the figure of \$60 million did not stem from any estimates developed by the TRIC or other ministerial or Coalition advisors, making him suspect ulterior motives.

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A DANGEROUS AMBIGUITY  
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[5](#). (C) General Nabil Khalil al-Obeidi, Director General of the Iraqi Veterans Agency (IVA) and member of the TRIC, met with PolMilOff on 27 August to discuss the PM directive. He was alarmed at the possibility that T&R funds of this magnitude could be allotted to the MOI. He stated that such

an action would effectively eliminate transparency in the process and surmised that much of the funds would be used to support manpower positions in the MOI for 'integrated' Badr militiamen. According to General Nabil, any process for militia pension disbursement would be administered by the IVA, and it would be unlikely that the IVA could develop the administrative systems and procedures to begin processing applications before the year-end elections.

16. (C) General Nabil also expressed some trepidation about ambiguity in the PM's directive. According to Nabil, the directive's statement that CPA Order 91 bans all militias "...except those under government control" is a deliberate weakening of the order, leaving open the possibility of legitimized militia activity nominally under the control of a politically-affiliated government Minister. (NOTE. The memo accurately reflects CPA 91, which prohibits militia "not under the command structure of the Iraqi Transitional Government...except as provided by federal law." END NOTE.) Nabil's comments are symptomatic of growing anxiety over a developing armed "neighborhood watch" concept promoted by several Shia ministers. (NOTE. Minister Jabr has several times expressed his opposition to this proposal, seeing the "neighborhood watches" as little more than incipient militias. END NOTE.)

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MINISTER JABR CLARIFIES HIS VIEWS  
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17. (C) On 28 August 2005, LTG Petraeus and AMB Yellin again met with Minister Jabr and discussed militias. Minister Jabr quickly stated that the \$60 million estimate was not scientifically calculated (although it does equate to the monies that are budgeted for the MOI Qualifying Committee -- tasked to update accurately the MOI employment rolls -- which could be considered a complementary process). The Minister mentioned an initial allocation of \$9.7 million, which he found to be totally inadequate. Minister Jabr agreed that success with militia T&R depends on ITG commitment to eliminating militia, not to subsidizing them. He also agreed that the process must address all militia, which made him unhappy to be the head of the process, since he will be accused of partisanship by all involved. Minister Jabr further said that he would address the TRIC transparency issue by fencing the money allotted to MOI for use by TRIC alone. After studying militia reintegration in Afghanistan and Lebanon, Minister Jabr concluded that there will be no problem integrating individual militia into the Iraqi military and police. He intends to spread former militiamen throughout the force so they will not be able to interact easily with their former comrades. He expressed his concerns about how he can be sure people leave the militia and what happens if there are more militia members than his budget can accommodate. As his closing comment on 28 August, Minister Jabr said, "We must totally finish the militia."

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COMMENT: TAKING CAREFUL STEPS FORWARD  
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18. (C) The suspicions of the TRIC members are rooted in the intractability of the militia issue. From the perspective of the TRIC, with the Kurdish Peshmerga effectively legitimized, there is no incentive for Shia militias to entertain dissolution. As such, any interest in the process from the current Shia-dominated ITG appears - at least to the TRIC - to be dubious. Nonetheless, the possibility for tangible results cannot be discounted, and this heightened interest on the part of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior should be encouraged with the following considerations: (1) The government must be effectively committed to eliminating militia groups, and (2) any initiated program must genuinely serve to eliminate them and not recast them in some other form. We will monitor the actions of the PM and the Minister to ensure they remain true to the policy of individual - not unit - integration of militia. END COMMENT.  
Khalilzad